

# Statistics Weekly

Thursday, 12 March 1992

## *The week in statistics ...*

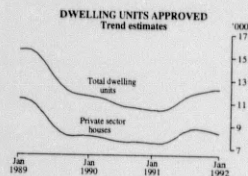
- ☐ Significant growth in total dwelling unit approvals 2
- ☐ Sharp increase in number of discouraged jobseekers 3
- ☐ Average earnings edge ahead 4
- ☐ How manufacturing fared in 1991 4
- ☐ This week in brief ... 5
- ☐ All the week's releases 6
- ☐ Calendar of key releases up to 24 March 7
- ☐ The latest ...
  - key State indicators 7
  - key national indicators 8

## Significant growth in total dwelling unit approvals

The total number of dwelling units approved in January 1992 rose by 5.4 per cent in seasonally adjusted terms following a 7.1 per cent rise in December 1991.

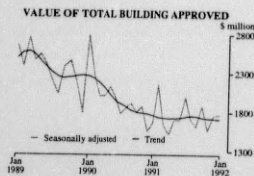
Private sector house approvals rose by a modest 1.7 per cent in January following two successive months of decline. Seasonally adjusted data are not separately available for private sector 'other' residential dwellings or public sector approvals, however it is evident that much of the growth in total dwelling approvals over the last two months has been generated from these sectors.

As a consequence, the trend series for total dwelling approvals is showing significant growth. However, the small increase in the seasonally adjusted number of private sector houses approved in January 1992 was insufficient to have any noticeable effect on the trend for that series, which has been declining since September 1991.



DWELLING UNITS APPROVED, JANUARY 1992

	Number	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
Private sector houses —			
Original	7,215	- 3.3	6.7
Seasonally adjusted	8,379	1.7	9.0
Total dwelling units —			
Original	10,605	- 1.0	15.4
Seasonally adjusted	12,833	5.4	20.3



The trend in the value of new residential building approved continues to display slow growth. However, the trend in the value of total building approved is falling slightly and has been doing so since August 1991, due to the continuing downturn in non-residential building.

VALUE OF BUILDING APPROVED, JANUARY 1992

	\$ million	Percentage change	
		From previous month	From corresponding month of previous year
New residential building —			
Original	849.4	- 2.6	8.1
Seasonally adjusted	1,035.2	6.2	12.7
Total building —			
Original	1,578.2	- 2.7	5.1
Seasonally adjusted	1,765.9	0.1	5.9

## Sharp increase in number of discouraged jobseekers

The number of discouraged jobseekers at September 1991 was 138,200, an increase of 37 per cent compared with September 1990. Some 75 per cent of discouraged jobseekers were women. Discouraged jobseekers are those persons who could start work, but are not actively seeking work because they believe that they could not get a job.

The reasons given by discouraged jobseekers for not actively seeking work reflected the general downturn in the labour market with 40,300 discouraged jobseekers believing that there were 'no jobs at all' compared with 9,000 twelve months earlier. As in previous surveys, the 45 to 64 year age group accounted for the greatest proportion of discouraged jobseekers (42%).

Amongst those persons who are not in the labour force, there are many people who may want to work, but are not actively looking or readily available to start in a job. These people are, nevertheless, an important group to take into account in analysing labour market statistics.

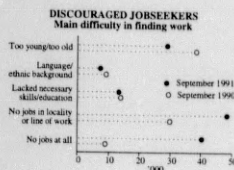
In total, 3,643,900 persons aged 15 to 69 were not in the labour force at September 1991. These persons were neither employed nor unemployed since they were not actively looking for work or were not readily available to start work. They comprised 30 per cent of the civilian population in this age group. Some 68 per cent of persons not in the labour force were women. The total included 2,547,500 people, such as retirees and students, who do not want to work.

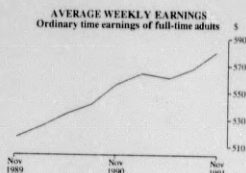
Some 819,300 persons not in the labour force were considered to be marginally attached to the labour force. These persons indicated a readiness to join the labour force if their circumstances were changed. Of these persons:

- ☐ 73 per cent were women, 41 per cent of whom said family reasons were preventing them from actively seeking work. The family reasons cited by most of these women (77%) were childcare related;
- ☐ 45 per cent intended to look for work in the next twelve months; and
- ☐ 71 per cent reported a preference for part-time work if they returned to the labour force.

PERSONS NOT IN THE LABOUR FORCE  
('000)

	September			
	1988	1989	1990	1991
With marginal attachment to the labour force	721.7	708.4	752.5	819.3
Wanted to work and actively looked for work	65.7	55.3	57.6	46.7
Discouraged jobseekers	83.8	76.1	100.9	138.2
Other	572.2	577.0	594.1	634.5
Without marginal attachment to the labour force	2,898.8	2,858.7	2,797.6	2,824.6
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,620.4</b>	<b>3,567.1</b>	<b>3,550.1</b>	<b>3,643.9</b>





## Average earnings edge ahead

Average weekly ordinary time earnings increased by 2.2 per cent for full-time adults between August and November 1991, according to preliminary estimates.

The increase was 2.4 per cent for males (to \$613.60) and 1.8 per cent for females (to \$515.80), yielding an overall average of \$580.10 in November, compared with \$567.70 in August.

AVERAGE WEEKLY EARNINGS, NOVEMBER 1991

	Average weekly earnings (\$)			Percentage change in 'Persons' from	
	Males	Females	Persons	Aug. 91	Nov. 90
Full-time adults					
Ordinary time	613.60	515.80	580.10	2.2	4.4
Total	654.90	527.60	611.30	2.4	3.5
All employees	590.60	393.30	501.80	2.6	2.3

The principal influences on the ordinary time and total earnings results are the flow through of the April 1991 National Wage Case decision and increased overtime payments for full-time adult males. Also there is some evidence that compositional change in the wage and salary earner labour force continues to be a factor in the increases.

Average weekly earnings statistics represent average gross (before tax) earnings of employees and do not relate to average award rates nor to the earnings of the 'average person'. Estimates of average weekly earnings are derived by dividing estimates of weekly total earnings by estimates of employment. Changes in the averages may be affected not only by changes in the level of earnings of employees but also by changes in the overall composition of the wage and salary earner segment of the labour force.

It should also be noted by those using average weekly earnings data for contractual adjustment or related purposes, that these estimates are preliminary. Final estimates for November 1991 are expected to be published on 2 April 1992 in *Average Weekly Earnings, States and Australia, November 1991* (6302.0).

For further information, order the publication *Average Weekly Earnings, Australia, Preliminary* (6301.0), or contact Mick Atkinson on (06) 252 6571.

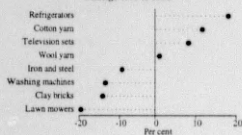
## How manufacturing fared in 1991

With all monthly data in for calendar year 1991, it is now possible to present a broader view of how Australian manufacturing industries performed in that year compared with the previous calendar year.

The publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary* (8301.0) contains up-to-date monthly time series data on the production of twenty-seven major indicators of production (twenty-five seasonally adjusted). The indicator commodities have been selected to give a broad industry representation of the manufacturing sector and are part of a much larger range of commodity items published in the series of ten *Manufacturing Production Bulletins*.

Continued ...

MANUFACTURING PRODUCTION OF  
SELECTED COMMODITIES  
Change 1990 to 1991



Of the twenty-seven indicator commodities most show that production levels in 1991 were well down on those recorded in 1990.

Major declines occurred in motor vehicle production with cars and station wagons showing a decline of 22.9 per cent between 1990 and 1991. Production of goods vehicles declined by 32.8 per cent.

Commodities produced by heavy industry also declined substantially with iron and steel production falling by 9.7 per cent, basic iron by 7.8 per cent and sulphuric acid by 36.4 per cent.

The decline in building activity was reflected in decreased production of clay bricks (down by 14.6%) and portland cement (down by 12.4%).

However, commodities produced by the textile industries showed mixed performances with production of cotton yarn and wool yarn increasing (up by 11.6% and 1.2% respectively) and production of cotton broadwoven fabric, wool broadwoven fabric and textile floor coverings falling (down by 6.7%, 2.4% and 5.0% respectively).

Production of consumer goods also showed mixed signals. The number of domestic refrigerators manufactured increased by 18.1 per cent from 1990 to 1991. Production of television sets also rose (by 8.2%), while production of domestic washing machines and lawn mowers fell by 14.0 per cent and 19.9 per cent respectively.

For further information, order the publication *Manufacturing Production, Australia, Preliminary* (8301.0), or contact Kevin Squair on (06) 252 5558.

## This week in brief ...

### ❑ Overseas visitors

The number of overseas visitor arrivals in December 1991 was 266,800, 5 per cent more than in December 1990. In seasonally adjusted terms, short-term visitor arrivals were 6 per cent less than in November 1991 while the trend estimate for visitor arrivals is showing a downward trend. The major source countries were: Japan with 57,700 (22% of total), the UK with 38,300 (14%), New Zealand with 34,600 (13%) and the USA with 19,000 (7%).

Source: *Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Australia, December 1991* (3401.0).

### ❑ First 1991 census figures for Western Australia

The total number of people counted in Western Australia on census night, 6 August 1991, was 1,586,393. This figure represents a 12.8 per cent increase in the census count of the State since the 1986 census. The total number of dwellings counted has increased by 16.5 per cent since the 1986 census, from 523,362 to 609,635 in 1991.

Source: *First Counts for Statistical Local Areas: Western Australia, 1991 Census of Population and Housing* (2701.5).

### ❑ Industrial disputes

In November 1991 there were 76 disputes reported in progress involving 19,400 employees with the loss of 35,200 working days. The construction industry reported 800 working days lost, the lowest for this industry since December 1990 (300).

Source: *Industrial Disputes, Australia, November 1991*, (6321.0).

## Inquiries

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### Suggestions

Any suggestions for improvement to this publication should be addressed to:

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(06) 252 6104

**Statistics Weekly**  
12 March 1992

## All the week's releases: 4 to 10 March

### General

Publications Issued in February 1992 (1102.0; \$6.00)  
Publications Advice, 6 February 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Publications Advice, 10 March 1992 (1105.0; free)  
Statistics Weekly, 5 March 1992 (1318.0; \$4.20)  
Economic Indicators, Vic., February 1992 (1307.2; \$6.50)

### Census of Population and Housing

Census 1991: First Count for Statistical Local Areas, WA, (2701.5; \$20.00)  
— *new issue*

### Demography

Overseas Arrivals and Departures, Aust., December 1991 (3401.0; \$6.50)

### Social statistics

Sport and Recreation, Urban NT, 1991 (4108.7; \$15.00) — *new issue*

### National accounts, finance and foreign trade

Information Paper: Australian National Accounts: Input-Output Tables on Floppy Disk, 1986-87 (5230.0; free)

Balance of Payments, Aust., December Qtr 1991 (5302.0; \$21.00)

Foreign Trade, Aust., Merchandise Imports, January 1992 (5433.0; \$9.50)

Local Government Finance, NSW, 1989 (5502.1; \$20.00)

### Labour statistics and prices

Average Weekly Earnings, Aust., November 1991, Preliminary (6301.0; \$10.50)

Industrial Disputes, Aust., November 1991 (6321.0; \$10.00)

Corrigendum: Student Finances, Aust., 1991 (6550.0; free)

### Secondary industry and distribution

Manufacturing Production, Aust., January 1992, Preliminary (8301.0; \$10.50)

Manufacturing Production, Aust.: Food, Drink, Tobacco, Stock and Poultry Food, December 1991 (8359.0; \$10.50)

Building Approvals, Aust., January 1992 (8731.0; \$13.00)

Building Approvals, NSW, January 1992 (8731.1; \$10.50)

Corrigendum: Building Approvals, NSW, October 1991 (8731.1; free)

Building Approvals, Vic., January 1992 (8731.2; \$10.50)

Building Approvals, Qld, January 1992 (8731.3; \$10.50)

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Qld, October 1991 (8741.3; \$10.50)

Building Approvals, WA, January 1992 (8731.5; \$10.50)

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, SA, December 1991 (8741.4; \$10.50)

Dwelling Unit Commencements Reported by Approving Authorities, Tas., December 1991 (8741.6; \$5.00)

Tourist Accommodation, ACT, December Qtr 1991 (8635.8; \$8.00)

### Transport

Motor Vehicle Registrations, Qld, January 1992 (9303.3; \$10.50)

Motor Vehicle Registrations, WA, January 1992 (9303.5; \$7.50)



## Calendar of key releases

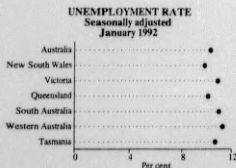
Expected releases over the fortnight to 24 March 1992

### March

- 11** Building Activity, Australia: Dwelling Unit Commencements, December Quarter 1991, Preliminary (8750.0; \$10.50)
- 12** The Labour Force, Australia, February 1992, Preliminary (6202.0; \$10.50)  
Import Price Index, Australia, December 1991 (6414.0; \$8.00)
- 13** Retail Trade, Australia, January 1992 (8501.0; \$10.50)
- 17** Australian National Accounts: National Income and Expenditure, December Quarter 1991 (5206.0; \$21.00)  
Australian National Accounts: Gross Product, Employment and Hours Worked, December Quarter 1991 (5222.0; \$12.00)  
Quarterly Indexes of Industrial Production, Australia, December Quarter 1991 (8125.0; \$10.50)
- 18** Housing Finance for Owner Occupation, Australia, January 1992 (5609.0; \$10.50)  
Export Price Index, Australia, January 1992 (6405.0; \$8.00)
- 23** Price Indexes of Articles Produced by Manufacturing Industry, Australia, January 1992 (6412.0; \$10.50)

## The latest ...

Changes to key State indicators — consolidated to  
10 March 1992



	NSW	Vic.	Qld	SA	WA	Tas.	NT	ACT	Aust.
— Percentage change from same period previous year —									
New capital expenditure (Sept. qtr 91)*	-11.4	-19.5	-15.7	1.3	-11.6	-24.0	n.a.	n.a.	-14.1
Retail turnover (Dec. 91) (trend estimate)	3.2	2.6	5.0	0.3	6.1	1.0	n.a.	11.5	3.3
New motor vehicle registrations (Jan. 92)†	11.9	2.4	-9.3	3.8	14.4	-1.5	14.4	-8.4	5.1
Number of dwelling unit approvals (Jan. 92)	1.6	-3.3	27.5	21.2	42.6	30.1	37.5	78.6	15.4
Value of total building work done (Sept. qtr 91)	-10.1	-34.2	-7.1	-24.4	-18.7	8.6	-9.6	0.5	-17.2
Employed persons (Jan. 92)*	-1.4	-2.6	1.7	-2.9	-1.2	-3.0	3.3	-0.6	-1.1
Capital city consumer price index (Dec. qtr 91)	1.5	1.7	1.8	1.8	-0.1	1.8	1.6	1.7	1.5
Average weekly earnings (full-time adult ordinary time) (Aug. 91)	5.1	4.3	4.3	5.6	6.9	4.1	6.9	4.9	4.9
Population (June 91)	1.3	1.1	2.2	1.2	2.0	0.9	1.0	2.9	1.5
Room nights in licensed hotels and motels, etc. (Sept. qtr 91)	-0.9	2.2	11.4	-1.5	3.7	-1.0	0.4	-5.7	3.1

\* Seasonally adjusted except for NT and ACT. † Seasonally adjusted except for Tas., NT and ACT.

# The latest ...

8

## Key national indicators – consolidated to 10 March 1992

			Latest figure available		Percentage change (a) on		
			Original	Seasonally adjusted	Previous period	Corresponding period last year	
Period							
<b>National production</b>							
Gross domestic product	— current prices	\$m	Sept. qtr 91	94,473	94,688	1.0	0.1
	— 1984-85 prices			62,900	63,396	- 0.3	- 1.9
<b>Industrial activity</b>							
New capital expenditure	— current prices	\$m	Dec. qtr 91	6,253	5,696	- 12.6	- 17.7
	— 1984-85 prices			4,921	4,487	- 11.4	- 14.5
Expected new capital expenditure		"	Six months to June 92	11,732	n.a.	n.a.	n.a.
Retail turnover	— current prices	"	Dec. 91	10,071	7,579	- 1.1	3.9
	— 1984-85 prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	17,342	15,377	- 0.6	1.1
New motor vehicle registrations		no.	Jan. 92	38,279	46,241	12.1	5.1
Dwelling unit approvals		"	Jan. 92	10,605	12,833	5.4	20.3
Value of all building approvals		\$m		1,578	1,766	0.1	5.9
Value of total building work done	— current prices	"	Sept. qtr 91	6,026	5,825	- 8.2	- 17.2
	— 1984-85 prices	"		3,828	3,701	- 7.8	- 16.8
Manufacturers' sales	— current prices	"	Dec. qtr 91	36,551	34,813	- 0.9	- 3.4
	— 1984-85 prices	"		25,418	24,215	- 1.0	- 2.8
Expected manufacturers' sales		"	Six months to June 92	69,535	n.a.	n.a.	- 3.2
<b>Labour</b>							
Employed persons (e)		'000	Jan. 91	7,570.9	7,736.3	0.6	- 1.1
Unemployment rate † (e)		%		11.2	10.3	- 0.3	1.9
Participation rate † (e)		"		62.7	63.4	0.1	- 0.4
Job vacancies		'000	Nov. 91	24.9	25.8	2.8	- 27.0
Average weekly overtime per employee		hours		1.14	1.06	- 9.7	- 15.1
<b>Prices, profits and wages</b>							
Consumer price index	1980-81 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 91	217.7	n.a.	0.9	1.5
Price index of materials used in manufacturing industries	1984-85 = 100.0		Dec. 91	121.2	n.a.	0.5	- 5.9
Price index of articles produced by manufacturing industry	1988-89 = 100.0		Dec. 91	111.7	n.a.	0.2	- 1.0
Company profits before income tax	\$m		Sept. qtr 91	2,982	2,841	21.2	- 17.9
Average weekly earnings (Full-time adults; ordinary time)	\$		Aug. 91	580.10	n.a.	2.2	4.4
<b>Interest rates (b) (monthly average)</b>							
90-day bank bills †	% per annum		Jan. 92	7.55	n.a.	- 0.15	- 4.3
10-year Treasury bonds †	"		"	10.10	n.a.	0.70	- 1.4
<b>Balance of payments</b>							
Exports of merchandise	\$m		Jan. 92	4,375	4,483	- 1.3	3.4
Imports of merchandise	"			4,023	4,002	1.6	- 4.9
Balance on merchandise trade (c)	"			352	481	- 20.0	278.7
Balance of goods and services (c)	"			182	268	- 38.0	n.a.
Balance on current account (c)	"			- 1,028	- 861	- 43.7	34.9
Terms of trade (d)	1984-85 = 100.0		Dec. qtr 91	n.a.	97.1	- 2.9	- 4.5
<b>Foreign investment</b>							
Net foreign debt	\$m		31 Dec. 91	144,772	n.a.	2.7	7.6
Net foreign liabilities	"			194,273	n.a.	4.3	10.5
<b>Exchange rates (monthly average)</b>							
US\$	per \$A		Jan. 92	0.7485	n.a.	- 3.1	- 3.9
Trade weighted index	May 1970 = 100.0		"	55.4	n.a.	- 3.5	- 3.8
<b>Other indicators</b>							
Population (resident at end of qtr)	million		June 91	17.3	n.a.	0.3	1.5
Overseas visitor arrivals	'000		Dec. 91	267	188	- 5.5	4.5

(a) Based on seasonally adjusted figures where available. (b) Source: Reserve Bank of Australia. (c) For percentage changes, a minus sign indicates an increase in the deficit; no sign means a decrease in the deficit or an increase in the surplus. (d) The ratio of the price of goods and services for exports to that for imports. (e) Later figures expected to be released, Thursday, 12 March 1992.

NOTES: † = change is shown in terms of percentage points. n.a. = not available.

Some of the figures shown are preliminary, some final, and some are revisions of previously published figures. Users should check the latest relevant publication or with the ABS Information Services if the status of the statistic is important.

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